

Connections

A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

November 20, 2014

Team Talk

by Roberta Broeker

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Hello Team MoDOT! It feels like just yesterday we were talking about fireworks and the Fourth of July. Time has flown and now the weather is colder, snow has fallen and we prepare ourselves for Thanksgiving next week. I know I'm not the only one who is thankful for the Governor designating the day after Thanksgiving as a state holiday. It is always enjoyable to have that extra time with friends and family to share in holiday traditions. I'm sure many of you will be racing to get the best deal for Black Friday or perhaps relaxing indoors watching the Mizzou game. Go Mizzou!

One of the greatest traditions of Thanksgiving is stopping to think about the things for which we are thankful. I'm actually on a year-long journey of thanksgiving. Last December, I read an article that talked about gratitude as a muscle...you have to exercise it to make it stronger. So every week I've been posting a few words on my Facebook page about something that makes me grateful. It has opened my eyes about the good things in my life, and made me appreciate things I took for granted. This week is a gratitude post bonus week...one on Facebook and one in Connections.

Last week I attend the Veterans Day celebration here at Central Office. As I watched the celebration I was proud to see coworkers recognizing the achievements, accomplishments and sacrifices made by their colleagues. It reminded me of one of the many things I am thankful for not only during this holiday season but throughout the year. I am thankful to be a part of Team MoDOT.

As a member of Team MoDOT, I am proud of the work we do. Each of us is part of delivering a transportation system that gets people where they need to go safely and efficiently. What we do is important to the community and it enhances lives. I am thankful for every person who is a part of that effort. During the Veterans Day celebration, I remembered another reason why I am so grateful to be a part of Team MoDOT and that is how passionate we are about celebrating each other's achievements.

"APPRECIATION CAN MAKE A DAY,
EVEN CHANGE A LIFE. YOUR
WILLINGNESS TO PUT IT INTO
WORDS IS ALL THAT IS
NECESSARY."

- MARGARET COUSINS

It was Margaret Cousins, founder of the All India Women's Conference that said, "Appreciation can make a day – even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary." I am thankful to be a part of a team that regularly puts their appreciation into words. It is my hope that as we move forward as a team we don't shy away from taking opportunities to recognize others, and we continue to be an organization that shares in the accomplishments of our coworkers.

As we approach Thanksgiving, take a moment to show a coworker you appreciate them. Thank them for their hard work and friendship. Thank you for all that you do and enjoy the holiday. Happy Thanksgiving Team MoDOT!

CONNECT WITH YOUR EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COUNCIL TODAY

?

EAC

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY COUNCIL

“The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts”

~ Marcus Aurelius ~

It is the mission of the EAC to foster and enhance a positive work environment for all MoDOT employees.

Thanksgiving, Black Friday and Last MU Home Football Game Will Create Extra Heavy Traffic This Holiday Weekend

by Linda Wilson-Horn

As Missourians are preparing to celebrate Thanksgiving and holiday shopping on Black Friday, MoDOT is taking steps to help keep traffic moving.

The majority of construction work zones will not be in place from noon Wednesday, Nov. 26 until mid-morning Monday, Dec. 1. However, some work zones have continual lane closures that are unable to be reopened for the holiday weekend.

Traveler Information Map

Check MoDOT's Traveler Info Map for weather-related road conditions, flood closures & work zone locations.



Tips for using the map

Text Report - Winter road conditions

Text Report - Road Closures and delays

Links to surrounding states

Text Alerts - Sign Up Now!

Email Notifications - Sign Up Now!

Get Your Mobile Apps

Available on the App Store

Available on the Android Market

Rate Our Work Zone

On Friday, Nov. 28, MoDOT staff will be monitoring and adjusting signal timing at intersections on state roads adjacent to major shopping centers in the urban areas around the state. In addition, the University of Missouri-Columbia has a home football game and heavy traffic is expected Friday morning along Interstate 70 and especially in the immediate Columbia vicinity. Motorists attending the game should plan extra travel time to make it to the game in time for the early afternoon kickoff.

Before you head out this holiday weekend, visit MoDOT's traveler information map at

www.modot.org to get the latest information on traffic congestion and road conditions that may affect your travel plans. The map provides real-time information regarding incidents on major roads that include lane closures. The MoDOT traveler information map can also be downloaded as an app to your phone. MoDOT's 24/7 customer service is also available to provide information on road conditions at 1-888-ASK-MODOT (275-6636).

Tracker Group Meets to Discuss Working Safely in Winter

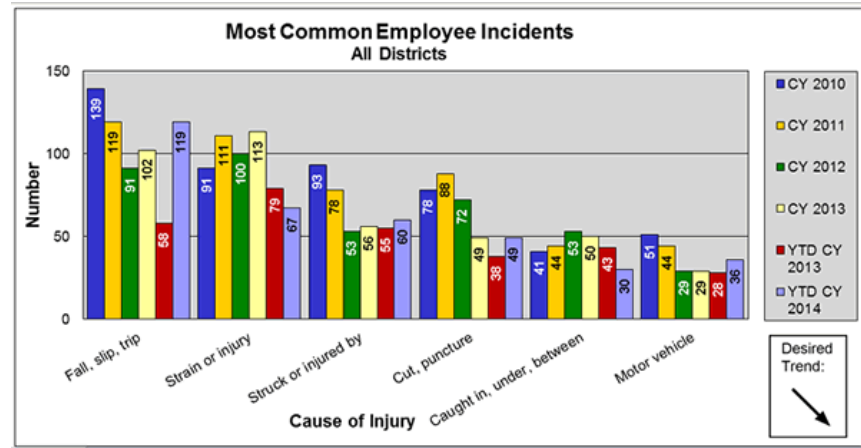
by Holly Dentner

Last week MoDOT employees from across the state gathered in Jefferson City for the quarterly meeting to discuss Tracker, MoDOT's performance management tool. After a few words from MoDOT Director Dave Nichols, the group got down to work by reviewing every measure that contained new data for the quarter.

While many measures were trending in the right direction, Director Nichols and Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger pointed to two that needed more attention to get them on the right track. Statewide the number of lost workdays by MoDOT employees this year is only slightly higher at 371, but

the exceptional performance by the St. Louis District with only four is carrying the rest of the districts. Nichols noted that we need to do a better job ensuring every employee goes home safe every day.

The second measure was final project costs coming in at 4.87 percent over the programmed costs for the first quarter of fiscal year 2015. Hassinger said he realized this was just one quarter of data, but most districts are trending in the wrong direction. He encouraged district staff to re-emphasize the “radical cost controls” we’ve used in the past to stretch our construction budgets.



The most common employee incidents was part of the Tracker Focal Point discussion. and getting lots of feedback from the group about how to improve.

After all the measures were discussed, the team moved on to this quarter’s “Focal Point.” The Tracker Focal Point began last year as a way to take a deeper look at performance on the district and division levels. The Tracker Focal Point allows the department to examine and compare additional data.

“Taking this deep dive into the data from districts and divisions reinforces our goal of making every employee responsible for MoDOT’s performance,” said Hassinger. “It’s a way to make sure we are all accountable for our work.”

This quarter’s focus area was safety during winter operations. The meeting took a different approach than past focal point discussions, by focusing very closely on a few key areas of concern

Hassinger started off the discussion by reminding the group how many employees will be out this winter fighting snow with only a few years of experience under their belts.

“Many of you have maintenance buildings where the majority of the staff has less than three years of experience,” said Hassinger. “We need to double down on our efforts to make sure these people are successful and safe.”

Southeast District Engineer Mark Shelton then led the rest of the meeting, asking the group to help him develop an action item list of ideas everyone can use as we approach the winter season.

First up, the group focused on the maintenance building lots, and how crews can safely maneuver them whether on foot or in a vehicle. Supervisors suggested pretreating the maintenance lots and walkways, setting up a traffic pattern for trucks coming in and out of the lot, installing additional lighting around the salt and materials loading area, and taking the time at the shift change to talk to employees about what’s going on and reminding them to be safe.

The discussion then shifted to fleet. Again, the suggestions from the maintenance supervisors and superintendents in the room covered a wide array of topics. Keeping a supply of replacement wiper blades on hand, designating a full time loader so drivers don’t have to get in and out of the trucks as much, and appropriate radio and cell phone use were all discussed, among other things.

Risk and Benefits Director Jeff Padgett then addressed the group, asking them to think about ways to not only keep employees safe, but customers as well. The conversations ranged from adding additional lighting and flags to make wing plows easier for customers to see to taking extra care when backing, especially at intersections and at-grade crossings.

State Maintenance Engineer Beth Wright talked about the third and final focus of the meeting, which was the winter operations drill and training for employees. The group talked about how important it was to have as much training as possible for new employees, and many thought one day to prep and drill for the winter season wasn’t enough.

Hassinger told the group this year MoDOT will follow its snow plowing policy. “It doesn’t make sense for us to be out there beating up our equipment and pavements,” said Hassinger. He encouraged all MoDOT winter operations staff to reacquaint themselves with the policy. You can find MoDOT’s snow plowing policy at http://epg.modot.org/index.php?title=133.4_Snow_and_Ice_Control_Operations.

Shelton promised the group that the items discussed would be cataloged and organized so all maintenance buildings can take advantage of the safety tips and ideas.

“Making safety a priority means taking it seriously, paying attention, and promoting safe behaviors even when you think it might be inconvenient,” said Hassinger. “We can’t let up. Make safety your focus every single day, now more than ever.”

Standardizing MoDOT's PPE Purchases

by Chris Rutledge

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) seems easy enough to figure out; simply go get a vest, hard hat, and some boots. However, with varied work tasks and work environments encountered by our field crews, there are many challenges in acquiring the appropriate equipment in a cost-effective manner.

As a result, the District Engineers and Safety Focus Team have charged a team to look at this situation and provide recommendations regarding the Department’s ways of assessing PPE needs and securing the needed equipment. The work of the team has been completed, shared with the Senior Management Team, and provided to Risk and Benefits and the District Safety and Health Managers to complete the logistics of implementation and communication to the field.



Highlights of the team’s recommendation include:

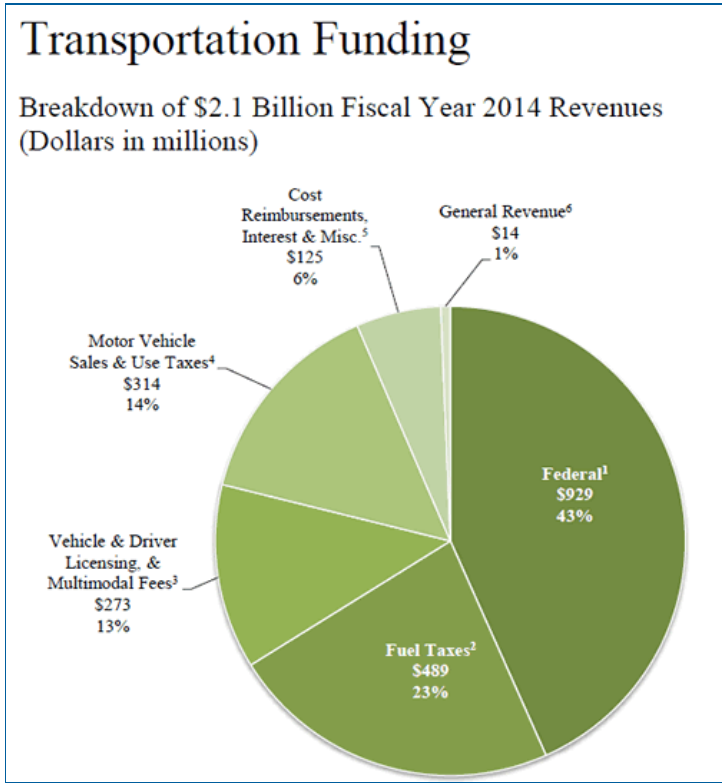
- Department-wide, require that all hard hats and beanies, hi-visibility vests and shirts, rain gear, and gaiter leggings be secured by state contract.
- Continue with the current boot replacement and prescription eyewear programs.
- Allow other PPE needs, including gloves and non-prescription eye protection, to be determined and secured by the local building or district.
- Personalized PPE is still allowed though not provided by MoDOT’s standard PPE procurement process.

The implementation of these recommendations will not conflict with any previous direction or requirements regarding PPE policy. While some provision of PPE may be kept on hand at a local level, these efforts will not require any centralized stockroom.

In the coming weeks, Safety and Health Managers will work with General Services regarding PPE acquisition needs and requirements. Communications regarding this direction will follow with full implementation of the team’s recommendations planned for January 2015.

Click here to see a list of MoDOT provided PPE - [List](#)

MoDOT's Financial Snapshot



MoDOT’s Financial Snapshot that provides answers to frequently asked questions regarding MoDOT’s finances is available on the website. The Snapshot answers frequently asked questions regarding MoDOT’s finances.

Some of the information found in the 2014 Snapshot: a summary of state and federal funds, the state’s federal fuel tax rates and fuel tax history, how we compare to other states on fuel tax rates, how highway user fees are distributed, and transportation facts.

Find the Snapshot here – [MoDOT’s Financial Snapshot](#).

Fatality Update

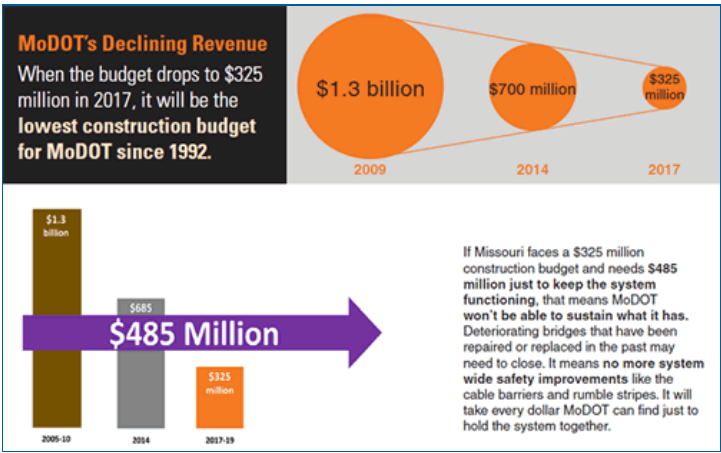


What's Happening



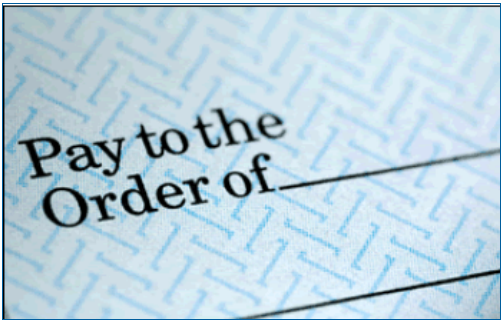
AASHTO Newsletter Features Former MoDOT Chief Engineer

The American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials is celebrating its 100 year anniversary by featuring articles about AASHTO's history. This month, MoDOT's former Chief Engineer Rex Whitton's service to Missouri and to the Country is documented in the publication. The article takes you through Whitton's 40 year career with MoDOT, where he started as a member of the survey crew, and through his AASHTO presidency where he was instrumental in promoting and securing the authorization of the Interstate Highway System. Read about Whitton in the [AASHTO Newsletter](#).



Meet MoDOT Publication Revised

If you've never taken a few minutes to look at the Meet MoDOT publication, now is the perfect time. Some changes have been made, primarily to update the revenue/expenditures information found in the new version of the "Financial Snapshot" released in October. Many interesting details on our organization can be found in the publication. Check it out – [Meet MoDOT](#).



November Paycheck Reminder

Due to the Governor's Executive Order closing state offices on Friday, Nov. 28, the end of the month pay date for November has been moved to Wednesday, Nov. 26. Direct deposit transactions will be dated Nov. 26, 2014.

Chat With The Chief

Remember to check out Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger's blog post. This week he talks about winter operations -



Chat
with the Chief.

November Retirements

Joe W. Howles – NW – 16 years
Allen D. Minnick – KC – 7 years
Linda J. Darden – SL – 26 years
Richard M. Hencinski – SL – 30 years

Jerry D. Lacey – SL – 14 years
Lawrence E. Welty – SL – 31 years
Alan E. Elbert – SL – 6 years
Richard Munoz – SW – 7 years

Billy L. Dodd – SW – 19 years
Eli M. Goodrum – SE – 11 years
Paula R. Lambrecht – CO – 27 years
Douglas A. Backes – CO – 22 years

In Memoriam

Gary Branson - active employee
SL District – November 2
Charles Vanostran, Jr.
former D7 – October 17
Jerry Lininger
former D1 – October 22
John Wyrick
former D7 – October 25
William Caton
former D2 – October 25

Roy Sutter
SL District – October 29
Gerald Schiermeier
former D3 – October 30
Archie Willimann
former D6 – October 31
Walter Summers, Jr.
former D6 – November 4

John Carson
former D3 – November 9
Robert Bradley
former D2 – November 10
Charles Kincaid
former D8 – November 11
Mark Chastain
SW District – November 13

Connections

The mission of Connections is to be a source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide.

Customer Relations - MoDOT
P.O. Box 270, Jefferson City, MO 65102
573.751.2840 / www.modot.org

Editor: Tammy Wallace

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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New Customer Relations Director Announced

by Dave Nichols

I'm excited to announce that we have hired a new Customer Relations Director. Fay Fleming will join the department as our CR Director on Dec. 1.

Fay is a results-driven executive who has more than 15 years of senior-level business experience in marketing, communications, strategic planning, research, training, writing, sales, and public speaking. She most recently was employed as the director of communications for the First Christian Church in Arlington, Texas, and as the director of the Business Performance company in Dallas, Texas, where she served as a consultant in the areas of marketing, organizational strategy, research and leadership development training.

Fay will transition into the job through the month of December as she makes the move from Texas to Missouri. Sally Oxenhandler will assist Fay through this transition period and then return to the Central District as the CR Manager there. Please join me in welcoming Fay to the department and thanking Sally for a great job as the interim CR Director.



Newly appointed CR Director Fay Fleming will begin her new role December 1.

Honoring Our Veterans

by Patrick Wood

Last week MoDOT celebrated Veterans Day by honoring the brave men and women who have served, or are serving in our armed forces. Events were held throughout the districts to recognize coworkers that have served.

Central Office held its celebration with Central District on Nov. 12. The event started with a few words from Director Dave Nichols and Assistant Chief Engineer Kathy Harvey. Following the introductory remarks Senior GIS Specialist Thomas Wilkerson performed the National Anthem.

Two Central Office U.S. Air Force veterans, Audits and Investigations Director Bill Rogers and Senior Information Systems Technologists Rhonda Thompson, took a moment to speak to all those in attendance about their time in the service.

Following the Rogers' and Thompson's remarks each veteran who previously identified themselves to be recognized during the event were



Senior Information Systems Technologist Rhonda Thompson shares her military experience with attendees. Click above to watch a video of the event.

To view a video of the event - [Video](#).

To see photos - [Photos](#).

acknowledged by Senior Human Resources Specialist Elizabeth Reed and Senior Civil Rights Specialist Angela Sutton and were presented with a certificate and pin.

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month

If you don't live with it yourself, then it's likely you have a family member or friend who does. Diabetes affects 26 million Americans, with 19 million people diagnosed and 7 million undiagnosed. And an estimated 79 million American adults aged 20 years or older have pre-diabetes, which puts them at high risk for developing the disease. Diabetes can cause serious health complications including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure and lower-extremity amputations.

Read this important information on understanding the different types of diabetes, how to prevent the disease and tools and resources – [Coventry Newsletter](#).



Stay Safe at Home This Winter

by Holly Dentner

As the weather changes and we move into the winter season, MoDOT takes every opportunity to check its equipment, train employees and refresh our winter operations skills. When it snows in Missouri, MoDOT is ready.

Staying safe during winter weather isn't just about work though. Now is the time to go through your personal checklist to make sure you and your family are ready for winter. Whether you are a seasoned snow fighter or this is your first year at the department, review these tips and be safe at home and on your way to work.

At home, take time to winterize your residence. ([Check out this list from repair and renovation expert Bob Vila.](#)) Keep some ice melt on hand and put the snow shovel and supplies where it's easy to access them. Take plenty of breaks if you shovel the sidewalk or driveway. If you're not used to strenuous work, shoveling snow puts a lot of stress on the body in a short period of time.

Prepare your vehicle for winter. Check your battery, lights, antifreeze, wipers, belts, and hoses. Put the ice scraper and other winter supplies in the car now so you don't have to dig for them when you really need them. Don't forget your tires: the condition of the

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Northwest Hosts Customer Service Staff

The Northwest District played host to the first of two customer service meetings on Tuesday, Nov. 18. In addition to the Northwest Customer Service Representatives, staff from Kansas City's customer service and traffic management center, Southwest's customer service team and one of the Central District customer service representatives participated in the meeting. The Northwest District's Emergency Operations Phone Team was also invited to participate, and many of them were at the meeting as well. Staff from the remaining districts met in Hannibal on Thursday, Nov. 20.

During the meeting, the team was able to learn about enhancements to the Call Report database, the Contacts Map and the Customer Service Tracker. There was a roundtable discussion on best practices around the state and Dr. Tim Crowley led attendees through stress management discussions and exercises. Each team reported on how they are investing their prize money from last year's Innovation Challenge and then they were given a tour of the district office complex, including the EOC and Customer Service areas. Each participant went home with a gift bag, courtesy of the St. Joseph Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Kudos to Senior Customer Service Representatives Shelly Abersold and Lisa Kellison and to Northeast Customer Relations Manager Marisa Ellison for organizing this very well received event.



Northeast Customer Relations Manager Marisa Ellison led the meeting and spoke with attendees about some important issues to remember going into winter operations.



Senior Organizational Performance Analyst Greg Clarkston went over several changes the group will be seeing soon, including changes to the Customer Service Tracker and Customer Concern Database.



Construction Project Office Assistant Phyllis Filley and Senior Customer Service Representative Louise Carroll were teamed up in a portion of Dr. Crowley's program about connecting and listening.



Dr. Tim Crowley spoke to the attendees on ways to

combat and manage stress in their every day lives, both at work and at home. He led the group through some exercises and gave them tips on practices to put in place each day to help manage their stress levels.



During a discussion on best practices, Senior Customer Service Representative Kim Gordon talked about a recent phone call she took from a customer and how she handled it.



A catered lunch was enjoyed by all.



Front row (l-r): Barb Holland, Lana Allen, Andrea Stoops, Melanie Noel, Tammy Childress, Phyllis Filley, Karen Walk, Jessica Burns.
Middle row (l-r): Lisa Kellison, Shelly Aebersold, Danielle Lankford, Sherita White, Lori Ferguson, Louise Carroll, Tina Grottoff, Michelle Kelley.
Back row (l-r): Tammy Wallace, Kendra Ezzell, Nicole Steele, Greg Clarkston, Jason Sims, Becky Walsh.

Service Awards Luncheon

A luncheon was held at the St. Jo Frontier Casino to honor employees with 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of service to the department. Honorees and their guests were treated to a steak or chicken dinner with a cheesecake dessert. Each guest of the honorees also received flowers to recognize their service and sacrifice to the department. District Engineer Don Wichern greeted each honoree, made a few brief remarks before the meal and then gave each attendee a framed certificate showing their years of service.



Twenty-year Honorees:

Front Row (from left): Milan Maintenance Supervisor Rodney Welch; Materials Inspector Janique Flora; Senior Construction Inspector Kris Buczek; Senior Materials Inspector Krista Burnett; Mound City Maintenance Supervisor Mike Lewis; District Maintenance and Traffic Engineer Marty Liles.

Back Row (from left): Senior Materials Inspector Michael Powell; Senior Construction Inspector Jason White; Chillicothe Maintenance Crew Leader Bryce Anderson; Savannah Senior Maintenance Worker Kelly Kurtz; Rushville Senior Maintenance Worker Tom Judah; Land Surveyor Stephen Miller.

Not pictured: Trenton Maintenance Crew Leader Trevor Leeper; Executive Assistant Karen Huber; St. Joseph Resident Engineer Greg Stervinou; Transportation Project Manager Wes Moore.



Twenty-five-year Honorees:

Front Row (from left): Regional Bridge Maintenance Supervisor Bill Gimse; Brookfield Maintenance Crew Leader Mark Corbin; Unionville Senior Maintenance Worker Jim Blanchard.

Back Row (from left): District Design Engineer Troy Slagle; Savannah Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Pittman; Cameron Senior Equipment Technician John Blades; Brookfield Senior Maintenance Worker David Lindbloom.

Not pictured: Carrollton Maintenance Supervisor Doug White; Bethany Maintenance Crew Leader (retired) Mark Wiley.



Thirty-year Honorees:
Front Row (from left): District Engineer Don Wichern; Senior Highway Designer Jack Smith; Assistant District Engineer Tony McGaughy; Maintenance Superintendent Charlie Roach.

Not pictured: King City Senior Maintenance Worker Ron Ettinger; Keytesville Maintenance Crew Leader Jeff Lewis; Keytesville Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Peters; Chillicothe Senior Construction Technician (retired) Danny Gramenz.



Thirty-five-year honorees:
St. Joseph Maintenance Supervisor Robby Blair; Grant City Maintenance Supervisor Dan Roach.



Forty-year honorees:
Brookfield Maintenance Crew Leader John Christy; Grant City Maintenance Crew Leader Gary Owens.

For more info

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Marcia.Johnson@modot.mo.gov

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St. Joseph, MO 64506-1399

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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Wall of Honor Dedicated to Veterans

The Northeast District held a dedication for the "Wall of Honor" located in the district office. Sixteen employees and retirees who are veterans attended the special tribute honoring them for their service to our country.

The "Wall of Honor" currently features employees and their family members who are serving in the military. With the invitation, many more employees and retirees shared their photos and ranks, and these will be added to the Wall.

Thank you to all Veterans!

Right: Aaron Harbin, the youngest veteran in attendance, and retiree Bob Moser, the oldest, cut the ribbon signifying the dedication of the Wall of Honor.

Below: Attending the Veteran's Day Tribute were (front) Ed Hess, Gary Tolivar, Jason Wilkerson (back) Bucky Ward- retiree, Jason Smith, Mike Chidster, Tom Owen, Tonya Lake, Bob Moser-retiree, Jon Brewer, Michelle House, Jess Haner, Tim Hills, Dan Brumagin, TK Brenner and Aaron Harbin.



Team Spirit a Success with Area Schools

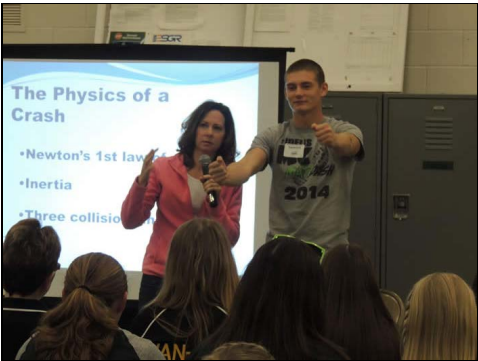
On Nov. 3, teams of students and advisors from the surrounding area participated in the Team Spirit Traffic Safety Leadership Training Conference at the National Guard Armory in Hannibal.

Approximately 68 students and advisors from Monroe City, South Shelby, Mark Twain, Van-Far and Palmyra High Schools participated in the Team Spirit workshop sponsored by MoDOT's Highway Safety Division and the Northeast Coalition for Roadway Safety. The workshop is designed to teach students to take leadership responsibility and set good examples with their fellow peers about staying away from drugs and alcohol, and supporting seat belt use.

Team Spirit also teaches students about the dangers of drinking and driving, texting and driving, not using a safety belt

and other traffic issues. The participants worked as groups in educational and motivational workshops and prevention program activities, and participated in leadership and team-building exercises. Students also heard first hand about the consequences from accidents and poor driving decisions and habits from Pam Holt, a registered nurse with Mercy Hospitals Trauma Services in Springfield (pictured left below) and VIP speakers Penny Lorenz, assistant director, Chad Burton and Kayle Denny for ThinkFirst Missouri.

During this conference, the high school students and advisors actively participated as school teams receiving educational training, and were challenged to develop individualized team action plans to be implemented within their own schools upon their return. Paula Gough, district engineer accompanied the South Shelby students which included her daughter, Emma, to the session (Paula and Emma are pictured in the bottom right in tie-dye).



Around the District...



Keith Killen, Champ Clark Bridge environmental assessment project manager, explains the status of the EA to the Citizen's Advisory Group earlier this month.



Hannibal maintenance completed some much needed concrete patching at the corner of Pirate Pride and McMasters in Hannibal earlier this month.



Jim Long (Macon Maint.), Chuck Schumann, Gale March and Bryan Moots (all of design) took a few moments to give blood at the drive last week at the Macon Regional Office. Thank you to everyone who came out to save a life!

For more info

Marisa Brown-Ellison
Customer Relations Manager
Northeast District

Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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Kansas City District

Kansas City District Honors Veterans

MoDOT’s Kansas City District Office recently did its part to acknowledge its workers, both men and women who gave up their freedom to serve our country. In honor of Veterans Day, a special luncheon and ceremony were held at the district office on Wednesday, Nov. 12. This is the second year the team has taken time to honor Veteran employees.

District Engineer Dan Niec, who is a current U.S. Naval Reservist, conducted the ceremony. He gave praise for those who served and thanked them for their contribution to our freedom. Niec mentioned that each veteran may have done something different during their tour of duty, but he added, “We are all bonded by that one common thing, we all took the oath.”

Niec asked each veteran to stand up and state which branch they served, for how long and the work they did. One by one, each MoDOT worker announced their work in service. They served in Vietnam, Korea, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Desert Shield, Bosnia and right here on the friendly soil of the United States.

The program also included guest speaker Steve Miller, Chairman of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission. Miller also gave high praise for those veterans who served our country.

“I am the great beneficiary, as are my family and my children, of the sacrifice and the commitment that each of you made.” Miller said, “We survive not because we’re a people that have all these freedoms, we survive because we are a people who are willing to give up our freedoms that others may be free.”

To see more photos, [visit MoDOT Kansas City on Sharepoint \(internal link.\)](#)



Department Hosts Ribbon Cutting to

Celebrate Key Northland Corridor

MoDOT, in partnership with the city of Kansas City, is hosting a ceremonial ribbon cutting to celebrate the nearly complete Route 210 Widening project.

Route 210 currently serves more than 13,700 vehicles per day between I-435 and Route 291. When complete, this project will widen Route 210 from two to four lanes between Ameristar Drive and Route 291, with 10-foot paved shoulders and several new turn lanes.

The project also includes rehabilitating bridges, which serves motorists for many decades to come. Ideker Inc, the project contractor, completed this project at an accelerated pace, having it ready for motorists in less than one year.



“Completing the Route 210 project represents a great advancement for better connectivity and economic development in the Northland,” said 1st District At-large City Councilman Scott Wagner. “It is also a great relief to have a project that has been on the books for so long, finally accomplished.”

This is a \$10 million project and was built through a partnership with the City of Kansas City and MoDOT.

Learn more about this [project online at www.modot.org/kansascity](http://www.modot.org/kansascity).

For more info

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Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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Central District Celebrates Veterans

On Nov. 12, the Central District partnered with Central Office to honor active and retired veterans in what will become an annual ceremony.

The district celebrated 13 employees at the ceremony. Please join us in thanking our veterans and their families for their sacrifices and for their dedication and service to our state and country.



Central District veterans honored at the ceremony were:

James Beattie Army and Army Reserve Senior Highway Designer	Eric J. Denton Air Force Senior Maintenance Worker	Carl Mosely Marines Senior Maintenance Worker
Joe Bax Army District Land Survey Manager	Jeff Keeven Army Maintenance Crew Leader	Susan Ringeisen Navy Senior Maintenance Worker
Larry Joe Sutton Air Force Crew Leader	Daniel Germann Army and National Guard Vienna South Lube Crew	Thomas Holland Army Intermediate Crew Worker
Jeff Withington Army Senior Maintenance Worker	Curt Holland Navy Bridge Maintenance	Travis Caringer Army Bridge Maintenance
Randy Blalock Army and National Guard Seasonal Maintenance Worker		

Highway Dedications Held in Irondale

This month the Central District helped organize two highway dedications in memory of two historic Irondale natives.

Aviation pioneer Thomas W. Benoist had a stretch of Highway U dedicated in his honor on Nov. 8 and legendary Army Ranger SGM Patrick R. Hurley had another portion of Highway U dedicated in his honor on Veterans Day.

Benoist was an Irondale native and was an early aviation pioneer who formed the world's first aircraft parts distribution company and started a successful aircraft manufacturing company. From January to April of 1914 he operated the world's first scheduled airline with daily flights from St. Petersburg to Tampa Bay in Florida. One of his planes also took part in the world's first parachute jump from a motor-powered aircraft in 1912.

Hurley was an Army Ranger who was one of the first members selected for the Army Special Operations Unit known as Delta Force. The Irondale native was killed in action in 1991 while serving in Operation Desert Storm and was inducted into the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame. The Army has also named Hurley Lake at Fort Bragg in honor of the Irondale native.

Pictures from both of these ceremonies can be found at our Central District Flickr page at http://www.flickr.com/photos/modot_central_district/

[Thomas W. Benoist Memorial Highway Dedication](#)

[SGM Patrick R. Hurley Memorial Highway Dedication](#)



For more info

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Comments & Suggestions

We would like to hear from you. Send comments and suggestions to Tammy Wallace at Tammy.Wallace@modot.mo.gov.

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St. Louis District Announces New North St. Louis County Area Engineer



Lisa Kuntz was named north St. Louis County area engineer earlier this month.

Kuntz is a 1999 graduate of the Missouri University of Science and Technology (formerly UMR) with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering. She is a professional engineer in the state of Missouri and has been with the department for more than 14 years.

In her most recent position as a transportation planning specialist, Kuntz managed both the I-270 North Environmental Assessment and I-70 Planning and Environmental Linkage Study.

“I am excited about the opportunity to serve as the new North St. Louis County Area Engineer. I have a good understanding of the transportation issues in the area from the studies that I have diligently worked on in my previous position. I look forward to helping meet the transportation needs of north St. Louis County as the new area engineer,” said Kuntz.

St. Louis District Honors Veterans

by Shaunda White

MoDOT employees along with their family members and Barrel Bob participated in the 31st Annual St. Louis Metropolitan Veterans Day Parade on Saturday, Nov. 8. The parade was held in downtown St. Louis with thousands of people in attendance to honor the veterans.



Mollie LeBlanc (left) and Theo Feeney (right) march with banner in the 31st Annual SL Metropolitan Veterans Day Parade in downtown St. Louis.



Jim Feeney marches to honor the Veterans in the parade on Nov. 8.

Within the district, MoDOT leadership visited each work unit and presented employees who are veterans with patriotic

cupcakes, stickers for their hardhats and a 'Thank You' card. The cupcakes, stickers and cards were symbols of gratitude to the veterans that served in any of our country's conflicts.



James Ackenhausen receives his patriotic cupcake at the St. Charles maintenance facility.



Craig Simmons, maintenance worker, is honored with a cupcake in front of his peers.

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Comments & Suggestions

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Southwest District at Work



CONGRATULATIONS – Customer Service Representative Tonya Staeger (right) recognizes Lenora Thompson for her work as an Adopt-a-Highway volunteer on McDonald County Route H near Noel. Thompson has been part of the program for 10 years and averages 10 trash pick-ups per year. The program requires picking up trash four times a year. (Photo/David Mitchell)



WELCOME – Regional Counsel Executive Assistant Michelle Mullings greets attendees at the Missouri Highways & Transportation Commission meeting held in Springfield Nov. 6. (Photo/David Mitchell)

First Snow of Season a Good Test of SW District's Response

by David Mitchell



Joplin Maintenance Worker Jacob McDonald (left) and Joplin Senior Maintenance Worker Richard Persinger discuss installation of a salt spreader on a truck ahead of anticipated snowfall the weekend of Nov. 15. (Photo/David Mitchell)

Weekend snowfall in the Southwest District on Nov. 15 and 16 was seen as a good test of the district's readiness for winter operations.

Saturday's expected snowfall didn't materialize, but another system moved across the district on Sunday leaving behind anywhere from a dusting in southern counties to as much as three to four inches in the north.

Crews were in the shop and ready to go Saturday ahead of the predicted winter weather. District Maintenance Engineer Michael Middleton said that was a benefit because it gave us another training opportunity for some of our new drivers.

Approximately 285 trucks and 500 drivers were involved in the effort to clear the district's highways of snow.

All routes in the district were pronounced clear within three hours after the snow stopped falling.

Johnny Mathews, northern area maintenance superintendent, said everything went well, especially for the first snow of the

season.

“Our biggest problem was traffic didn’t slow down as it should have,” he said. “We had lots of traffic going to Kansas City for the Chiefs football game.”

There were some slide-offs and crashes along I-44 in the Mount Vernon and Marshfield areas, but Middleton said they were cleared up quickly. He said MoDOT’s emergency response personnel reacted well, as did emergency operations center call-takers who handled more than 125 calls over the weekend.

“I was pleased with how we did in the first storm,” Middleton said.

Middleton was especially pleased that no MoDOT vehicles were involved in any crashes and no employees were injured on the job.

“It won’t be our worst storm,” he said, “but it gives us confidence to deal with the next one.”

Costume Contest Raises Funds For Charitable Campaign

by David Mitchell

Employees at the Southwest District Office in Springfield used a Halloween costume contest to raise money for the Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign.

“It is fun because it brings out the kid in you,” said Springfield Senior Highway Designer Sharon Needham.

Needham organizes the contest every year.

This year, 13 costumed district employees entered the super heroes-themed contest. People voted for their favorites by contributing money from mid-October through the first week of November. The costume getting the most contributions won.

Two entries tied for the top spot: Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Shannon Kellner (a.k.a., Super Lazy) and Needham (a.k.a., Underdog).

The contest raised \$73.55, with all funds going to the Home for Life Cat Sanctuary in Buffalo.

Next year’s theme for the Halloween costume contest is the 1970s.



Costume contest co-winners: Assistant District Maintenance Engineer Shannon Kellner (top) and Senior Highway Designer Sharon Needham.

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MoDOT to Help Grant Holiday Wishes to Southeast Families

Can you remember waking up early Christmas morning, rushing to the tree and then spying the special toy you had been longing for all year? For some families, making these memories is easy. But sometimes a little extra help is needed, and that's where the Christmas Angels program comes in. Through the program, MoDOT volunteers raise money to purchase gifts for children in need within Southeast Missouri.

"The program began decades ago with a crock pot of chili and the desire to help at least one child," said Transportation Project Designer Jeff Wachter. "With the help of area businesses, organizations and generous individuals, the program has grown. Last year, the event raised nearly \$5,500-helping over 100 children."

This year's event will be held Wednesday, Dec. 3, with chili orders due by 4 p.m. Monday, Dec. 1. The cost is \$4 and will include a 16-ounce cup of chili, crackers and chips. Current MoDOT employees and retirees volunteer to cook, pack and deliver chili for the event. With the funds raised, volunteers purchase gifts for children who would not otherwise receive gifts.

Volunteers work with the Department of Family Services to identify needy children in the area.

"The program has grown locally, and many businesses and organizations purchase chili for their employees," said Senior Design Technician Kathy Hixson. "Participants receive a hot lunch and help needy families at the same time."

To place an order, please email sechristmasangels@yahoo.com or call (573) 258-3277. Please include your name, address, phone number and requested time of delivery with your order. Orders of 6 or more in the Sikeston area can be delivered. The deadline to order is 4 p.m., Monday, Dec. 1.

Businesses or individuals wishing to donate to the Christmas Angels program may send or drop their donations by the Division 10 Highway Employees' Credit Union Office, located at 337 North Main Street in Sikeston, Mo. Checks can be made out to the Christmas Angels.

For more information about the Christmas Angels program, contact Wachter at (573) 472-5294 or Hixson at (573) 258-3277.



Mike Smith, MoDOT volunteer, enlists the help of his son to choose presents for children in need. Several retirees also temporarily rejoined the MoDOT team to help cook, pack and distribute chili during the fundraising event.

Southeast District's 20, 25 & 30-Year Service Award Recipients

The SE District management team along with Chief Engineer Ed Hassinger gathered at the Poplar Bluff Holiday Inn on Nov. 7, to show appreciation for the district's long-term service award recipients. The event included a catered lunch, as well as a presentation of awards from District Engineer Mark Shelton and Hassinger.



Click the image above to view photos from the 20, 25 and 30-year service award luncheon.

Please help us in thanking the following employees for their dedication to the Department and decades of hard work for Missouri's taxpayers.

20-Year Recipients:

Elquin Auala, Craig Compas, Bernard Cook, Gary Copeland, Charles David Coward, Richard Heckendorn, Eric Henson, Jeffrey Hillis, Larry Hurt, Jeffrey Jarrell, Norman Malkowski, Kristy Pettit, Larry Pierce, Richard Powell, Chris Rutledge, Janice Simpher, Scottie Smith, Brenda St. John, Randall

Sutton, Louis Trotter, Donald Wallace, Jr., Kevin Williams

25-Year Recipients:

Robert DeClue, Curtis Dowden, Jeffery Downing, Donna Ferkel, William Lee Freeman, Roy Gene Gaither, Brent Halford, Tommy Hodges, Wade Lacey, Gary Riley, Charles Robinson, James Robinson, Jimmy Simpson, Kim Smith, Jimmy Trout, Jackie Dale Vermillion, Jr., Jeff Wachter

30-Year Recipients:

Curtis Baldrige, David Blalock, April Brock, Mackie Gaddis, Keith Gentry, Reginald House

Photos from the ceremony can be downloaded from the SE District's Flickr account at: www.flickr.com/photos/modot_se/sets/72157649227162635. To download photos, double click on the photo you would like to download (it will open in a full screen view). Then, click on the downward arrow in the lower right of the screen. Select the size you would like to download. When the dialog box pops up on the bottom of the screen, click the arrow beside "save." Select "save as" and then specify where you would like the photo to be saved.

For more info

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